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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRISTINA 000661

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DEPT FOR DRL, INL, AND EUR/SCE, NSC FOR BRAUN, USUN FOR DREW SCHUFLETOWSKI, USOSCE FOR STEVE STEGER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/10/2016

TAGS: PGOV PREL KDEM UNMIK YI

SUBJECT: KOSOVO: LDK ASSERTS PRIMARY POSITION IN GOVERNMENT IN A LETTER TO PM CEKU

REF: A. PRISTINA 609

1B. PRISTINA 648

Classified By: COM TINA S. KAIDANOW FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

11. (C) SUMMARY. A July 6 letter sent by the LDK party presidency to Kosovo Prime Minister Agim Ceku continues to make news over a week after its existence was leaked to the press. The key issues in the letter were the assertion by the LDK that the party -- and not Ceku -- would have authority over ministers in a new government and that the LDK would lead Kosovo's final status negotiations process. Ceku and his AAK party publicly rejected these demands. Opposition parties are using the letter as evidence of both a "breakdown" within the ruling coalition government and chaos within the LDK. Strains within the government and between the government and opposition parties continue to test the strength of the fragile Unity Team. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) The presidency of Kosovo's largest party and senior government coalition partner, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), sent a letter July 6 to Kosovo Prime Minister and member of junior coalition partner the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) Agim Ceku asserting the LDK's prerogatives in government and in the Kosovo status process. The letter, signed by Eqrem Kryeziu, an LDK vice president, and given to USOP by Deputy Prime Minister Lutfi Haziri (of the LDK), demands that the LDK name the heads of any new ministries or senior positions created by the government and that it be responsible for disciplining or replacing its ministers in the government. According to the letter, the LDK must also retain the leading role in Kosovo's final status negotiation process.

13. (SBU) Realizing almost as soon as they sent it what a clumsy political move the letter represented, LDK leaders scrambled to retrench. In an interview published August 2 in local LDK-friendly newspaper "Bota Sot" Haziri, on behalf of the LDK leadership, proclaimed that the letter was only the confirmation of earlier political agreements between the two coalition partners. Haziri maintained that the letter confirms the LDK "will respect our agreement with the AAK, empower the Prime Minister by strengthening the stability of

the governing coalition, and request better performance from LDK ministers." He also said that his responsibility to his party and general practice as deputy prime minister was regularly to inform the LDK of the government's work.

¶4. (SBU) Opposition parties, particularly the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) and Reform Party Ora (PRO), naturally seized upon the awkward public dispute as a sign of weakness in the Ceku government and have said publicly they want to discuss it at the next plenary session of the Kosovo Assembly. Surroi's "Koha Ditore" newspaper, eager to fan the flames, reported August 8 PDK secretary general Jakup Krasniqi's comment that the letter was disrespectful of Kosovo's institutions, written at a moment when the LDK leadership feels vulnerable and therefore has acted to assert itself in a way inconsistent with the "good of Kosovo." Surroi himself also responded to Point 5 of the letter (see text in paragraph 6) which asserted the LDK's right to lead the multi-party Kosovo Unity Team for final status negotiations: "It would be beneficial for the LDK and Mr. Ceku to explain what 'leader of the final status negotiations process' means so that they're on the same page as us."

¶5. (C) COMMENT. This clumsy broadside exposed the internal tensions within the LDK and the governing coalition of the PISG. More important, it demonstrates clearly the challenge of persuading the Kosovar leadership to present a united front in ongoing final status negotiations. PM Ceku told COM that the letter was "unfortunate," but added he is confident he has the full support of President Fatmir Sejdiu and AAK party head Ramush Haradinaj (ref. B). We continue to urge all Unity Team Members to set aside political differences -- even harder in a season of internal party elections -- for the good of the negotiating process. END COMMENT.

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¶6. (SBU) Text of Eqrem Kryeziu's July 6 letter to Prime Minister Agim Ceku (USOP translation):

Respected Prime Minister,

In accordance with the Agreement between the Democratic League of Kosovo and the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo, on the coordination of actions within the Government and for other important processes in Kosovo, represented by Mr. Eqrem Kryeziu, Deputy President of the LDK, and Mr. Ramush Haradinaj, President of the AAK.

Having in mind current developments in Kosovo as well as Kosovo's requirements and challenges during and following its status, having in mind the agreement for the governing coalition at the central level as well as the latest changes that have also reflected positively in the work of the Government, the LDK Presidency, at its regular meeting, and in accordance with the Agreement between the two political entities, the LDK and the AAK, once again confirm that:

(1. All of the high level positions in the new Ministries of Government (Ministers, Deputy Ministers), high level officials of Agencies, Boards and departments, will belong to the LDK.

(2. Deputy Prime Minister Lutfi Haziri will be mandated to follow the performance of the Kosovo Government minister representing the Democratic League of Kosovo, as well as lead their evaluation process and recommendations from the LDK Presidency.

(3. The Regulatory Boards of Agencies nominated by the Government and the Assembly will have to be reformed, aiming for added efficiency and increased professionalism.

(4. Out-of-the-country Kosovo representatives have to be decided in consultation with the LDK and be named by the Kosovo President, which also includes specializations,

accreditations, and the delegations of out-of-country personnel.

(5. Important processes for the development of Kosovo, including the negotiations on status modalities, should be lead by the LDK, in full coordination with the AAK.

The LDK Presidency
MA Eqrem Kryeziu
The First LDK Deputy President

¶7. (U) U.S. Office Pristina clears this cable for release in its entirety to U.N. Special Envoy for Kosovo Martti Ahtisaari.

KAIDANOW